

If life's like a blank canvas, memories are the kaleidoscope of colours on it. At the beginning of each brand new day, I pick up my paintbrushes and with the dexterity of a seasoned artist, start to paint on my canvas. "Ah it's too dull here" "No that's too garish!" Stroke by stroke, I create memories, add colour and new dimensions to my life. Memories are the very core of my soul, without them I would be a mere empty canvas: a jarring void in an art gallery filled with other masterpieces. That's why memories are so important to me – and that's why I believe in memories.

At the same time I was celebrating my eighth birthday, my grandfather forgot about his. As I learned how to tie my laces and plait my hair, my grandfather forgot which family members had died – including my grandmother. Alzheimer has taken away not only his ability to remember, but also reduced him to a glum, decrepit figure in a shapeless polyester outfit at a corner of the nursing home. Watching his frail body waste away, a perplexing wave of emotions overcame me. For the first time in the eight years of my life, I was afraid. Afraid that someday, I will forget everything, and end up being forgotten.

From then onwards, I began to cherish my ability to remember.

Novelist Haruki Murakami once said: "Memories are what warm you up from the inside. But they're also what tear you apart." There is a certain amount of truth to this statement, but I believe more than anything else that memories can inspire and push me forward. Yes, there are ups and downs in my life, some experiences which I wished could be erased from my canvas completely. But without them, would I still exist? Thus, whenever there is a gloomy spot on my canvas, I will simply look at the brighter hues on that very same canvas and remind myself of the better times before, so that I will not wallow in self-pity but instead be more willing to look on the brighter side of life. Then I will have the courage to pick up my paintbrush again, swirl it in a brighter shade, dab it over the dark spot and continue sculpting my future ahead.

Memories are ephemeral. Like the footsteps on the beach, they can be easily washed away by the ferocious waves of time, leaving nothing but a trail of frothy white foam. But it's these memories that help me, and others to relate more deeply to the human experience. So, every once in a while, I will dust off the dirt on my canvas and admire the wonderful myriad of colours on it. I will reminiscence the good old times,

learn from my past mistakes, and continue making even better memories for everyone, in hope that they will return the favour and remember me as well. This, I believe.